

B Bernardo Cavallino of Naples, 1616-1656

September 14, 1984

BAROQUE IMAGERY

November 6, 1984 through January 6, 1985

The Cleveland Museum of Art
November 14 - December 30, 1984
The Kimbell Art Museum
Fort Worth, Texas
January 26 - March 24, 1985
Museo Pignatelli Cortes, Naples
April 24 - June 26, 1985

More than forty works of art produced in Europe during the Baroque period--approximately 1600-1750--make up an educational exhibition that complements the major special exhibition, Bernardo Cavallino of Naples, 1616-1656. This support show, Baroque Imagery, introduces the art of Cavallino's time and presents paintings, prints, drawings, and sculpture by major Baroque artists, many of whom played an important role in the development of Neapolitan art. Their themes and subjects include religious and pagan stories, landscape, still life, genre, and portraits. The exhibition is drawn largely from the collections of The Cleveland Museum of Art with a few major loans from the Allen Memorial Art Museum of Oberlin College.

Around 1600 a style of architecture, sculpture, and painting developed in Italy which during the next 150 years spread, more or less altered, all over Europe and to the New World. The style was called "Baroque" by art critics of later times who condemned its dramatic irregularities for breaking or ignoring the rules of the Classical art they profoundly admired. Even today, when the term no longer carries its original connotations of ridicule and disapproval, Baroque art is often characterized as exaggerated, distorted, theatrical.

The Baroque style in fact had its beginnings in the desire of late sixteenth-century Italian artists to replace the mannered and exaggerated features of the art of the last phase of the Renaissance with a new clarity and simplicity. Baroque art developed in tandem with the Counter-Reformation, as the Church sought to express in all the arts its renewed religious devotion and confidence after nearly a century of defending itself against Protestant movements.

(more)

The new movement set in with full force in the last decade of the sixteenth century. Its two main forces were the naturalist revolution wrought by Caravaggio, who for the first time depicted sacred subjects in images taken from everyday life, and the Classical and Renaissance principles revived by the Carracci family. These two distinct but not irreconcilable trends met in Rome around 1600 and catalyzed the development of Baroque art. Succeeding generations, with ever-increasing daring, created grand illusions, of light, space, movement, and emotion.

From Rome Baroque art spread throughout Europe. To Naples, not far south of Rome, came a steady stream of artists: first Caravaggio, driven there by scandal and staying only long enough to produce works that probably shocked local painters still working in the Mannerist style; then Annibale Carracci and his pupils, Guido Reni and Domenichino; the Spaniards Ribera and Velazquez; Artemisia Gentileschi, who, like Ribera, set up shop and stayed for many years; and possibly the French painter Vouet and the Flemish painter Van Dyck. Artists who did not visit the city, including Poussin and Rubens, were represented by works in Neapolitan collections, the most important of which were formed by some of the Spanish viceroys and foreign merchants and financiers living in Naples.

Several major paintings from the Cleveland Museum's collection are in the exhibition: Mattia Preti's St. Paul the Hermit, Jusepe de Ribera's St. Jerome, and two of Salvator Rosa's Witchcraft scenes. Two other significant seventeenth-century Baroque paintings in the Cleveland collection are represented by photographs, Cavallino's Adoration of the Shepherds, which is included in the Cavallino show, and Caravaggio's Crucifixion of St. Andrew, which remains in its customary place in the Museum galleries. The Allen Museum has lent Agony in the Garden by the Roman mannerist painter Cavaliere d'Arpino; it is the earliest work in the show, dated ca. 1597/98.

(more)

3-baroque imagery

Among the important sculptures included are Puget's Blessed Alessandro Sauli and Bernini's Head of Proserpine, both from the Cleveland Museum collection. Prints and drawings by Castiglione, Domenichino, Rubens, Vouet, Callot, and other important Baroque artists are included.

John Schloder, assistant curator in the Museum's Department of Art History and Education, organized the exhibition. Dr. Schloder has also prepared a catalogue, available at the Museum Bookstore.

#

For additional information or photographs, please contact the Public Information Office, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106; 216/421-7340.